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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001465

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: AHMADINEJAD VISIT SCHEDULE STILL FLUID

REF: A. ANKARA 1430

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1405

Classified By: CDA Doug Silliman for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) President Gul's Foreign Policy Advisor Amb. Gurcan Turkoglu characterized Iranian President Ahmedinejad's August 14-15 Istanbul trip to CDA as a "political necessity" to maintain good bilateral relations. It is impossible for Turkey to ignore Iran, he said. Given the nuclear issue's growing urgency, President Gul agreed to a date in the hopes of positively influencing Iran's response to the P5 1 proposal, and only after months of postponing the visit. Gul will deliver the necessary tough messages during his private meeting with Ahmedinejad. CDA reiterated USG concerns. (reftels). Separately, Murat Esenli, special advisor to Foreign Minister Babacan, told CDA August 11 that Ankara knows the timing of the visit is unfortunate, but that Turkey must sustain a dialogue with Tehran, not least because Turkey imports 14 percent of its energy needs from Iran.

[1](#)2. (C) Turkoglu characterized Ahmedinejad's schedule as fluid, expanding from the initially proposed half-day visit to a day and a half, nothing that the GOI continues to make last minute requests. All meetings will occur in the Ciragan Palace Hotel and not/not in official government buildings. President Gul will greet Ahmedinejad at the hotel, hold a tte--tte, then meet with the full delegation. He will also host a dinner that evening at the Ciragan Palace. Ahmedinejad plans to hold a press conference on August 15 followed by meetings with Prime Minister Erdogan and FM Babacan. (An Iranian press outlet's correspondent here was told Ahmedinejad plans to hold two press conferences on August 14, one for the Iranian press and one open session.) The Iranian delegation has also asked to attend Friday prayers at the Sultan Ahmet ("Blue") mosque before returning to Tehran. Turkoglu did not mention meetings with "Shia community leaders," as was reported in the press.

[1](#)3. (C) Turkoglu said the Iranians insisted on signing at least some agreements during the visit for their "propaganda value." He expected Turkey and Iran would sign agreements on cultural and historical cooperation and counternarcotics cooperation. MFA Undersecretary Apakan told CDA August 12 that no significant oil or gas contracts would be signed, but that the GOT has prepared border security, terrorism, and environmental agreements. Turkoglu commented the GOI is not pleased with what it considers less than adequate protocol arrangements. Recent Iranian media criticism of the low-key schedule has prompted the GOI to push for more.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: By all Turkish accounts, the Ahmedinejad visit is very much a work in progress. While determined to go through with the visit in the spirit of good neighborly

relations, the Turks are conscious of U.S. and other Western concerns and seem to be taking steps to deflect the more egregious Iranian protocolary and substantive requests.

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